



To: Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee

From: Barbara Henry, First Selectman, Town of Roxbury

Date: March 9, 2015

Re: **SB-946, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE REVENUE ITEMS IN THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in *opposition* to **Section 26 of SB-946**, which will shift the full financial responsibility of resident state trooper costs to the towns.

Significantly reducing funding for the resident state trooper program will force many of our small towns to eliminate the resident state trooper program or reduce the number of troopers.

Small towns simply do not need to maintain a full-time police department of their own, given the size and public safety needs of the community. Recognizing this, the Resident State Trooper program was created as an effective state-local partnership that allows towns to share in the cost of state trooper coverage in the community. Both the state and the towns benefit because Resident State Troopers are often called upon to respond to state police emergencies although towns pay 70% of the cost of the trooper plus hefty fringe benefit rates.

Moreover, towns that do not have their own departments and choose not to hire a resident state trooper must rely on patrols from the nearest state trooper barracks. As a result, if towns decide to cut their Resident State Trooper program, the state will not realize any budget savings because it will still have to provide public safety services in those areas.

Over the years, more and more small towns have chosen to utilize resident state troopers to provide greater public safety protection to their citizens. Although the cost to communities has gone up to 70 percent plus a 92% fringe benefit rate, it is still viewed as the best way for small communities to have a law enforcement presence.

To address concerns with the cost of maintaining the resident state trooper program, Roxbury and Bridgewater are piloting a program to share a trooper. The program benefits residents of both of our communities but unless costs are manageable and predictable, it will make it difficult to sustain this program.

Clearly, it is in the best interest of our residents and our state as whole, if towns can maintain their Resident State Trooper programs.

Lawmakers should reject Section 26 and, instead, look at ways of helping towns make the costs associated with the program more manageable.